

LA-UR-17-23464

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

Title: Norris Bradbury Tribute by J. Robert Oppenheimer

Author(s): Meade, Roger Allen

Intended for: Internal Distribution

Issued: 2017-04-27

Disclaimer:

Los Alamos National Laboratory, an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer, is operated by the Los Alamos National Security, LLC for the National Nuclear Security Administration of the U.S. Department of Energy under contract DE-AC52-06NA25396. By approving this article, the publisher recognizes that the U.S. Government retains nonexclusive, royalty-free license to publish or reproduce the published form of this contribution, or to allow others to do so, for U.S. Government purposes. Los Alamos National Laboratory requests that the publisher identify this article as work performed under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Energy. Los Alamos National Laboratory strongly supports academic freedom and a researcher's right to publish; as an institution, however, the Laboratory does not endorse the viewpoint of a publication or guarantee its technical correctness.

Norris Bradbury Tribute by J. Robert Oppenheimer

R.A. Meade, ed.

Editor's Note

Stored on a reel of microfilm are three faint and barely readable letters written on the occasion of Norris Bradbury's fifteen-year anniversary as Director of the (then) Los Alamos Science Laboratory. The first letter, written by Los Alamos Public Relations Officer John V. Young, asks Oppenheimer to send a "congratulatory message to be read at a ceremony honoring Bradbury's tenure as Laboratory Director. The second letter is Oppenheimer's response to Young, and the third is Oppenheimer's congratulatory message to Bradbury. The three letters are transcribed below.

October 10, 1960

Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer
Director, Institute for Advanced Study
Princeton, New Jersey

Dear Dr. Oppenheimer:

We thought you would be interested to know that the Regents of the University of California are planning to put on a bit of ceremony for the 15th anniversary of Norris' becoming Director of the Laboratory, which is the same date he became a civilian employee of the University. Although his anniversary date is actually October 14, as you will recall, the ceremony will be here on October 21, because of a conflict of dates on the Regents' schedule.

If you should wish to send a brief congratulatory message, we could read it during the program as a surprise to Norris, and in that event I would like to suggest that you send it to me so it won't fall into his hands prematurely.

Yours very truly,

John V. Young
Public Relations Officer

14 October 1960

Dear Mr. Young:

Thank you for your note. This is a letter for Norris's fifteenth anniversary. If it does not seem to fit the occasion on the 21st, you may wish to read the final greeting, and let him have the letter privately.

With good wishes,

Robert Oppenheimer.

October 1960

Dear Norris:

It was fifteen years ago that you and I first talked of the possibility – to me the desirability – of your taking over the direction of the Los Alamos Laboratory. I remember your hesitations, and your reluctant agreement to do it for some six months.

Even more, I remember your first visit to Los Alamos, at the invitation of (then) Captain Parsons. More than anyone else who came to Los Alamos, you expressed, with force and eloquence, your misgiving about what we were up to, and your reluctance to be involved in it.

Now fifteen years have elapsed, and you have earned the respect, the gratitude, and the affection of the many men and women who have worked in the Laboratory, and the appreciation and indebtedness of all of us, both for what the Laboratory has undertaken and accomplished, and for the spirit in which it has done so. The seriousness with which you entered on these responsibilities has contributed very much to the way in which we have met them.

I wish to join my name to the many who salute you on this day and send good wishes for your future.

Very sincerely,

Robert Oppenheimer.